

United States Mint at Denver Celebrates 100 Years of Change

February 1, 2006

Mayor Declares February 1st “United States Mint at Denver Day”; Current & Former Employees Present Time Capsule

DENVER, CO — The United States Mint at Denver commemorated 100 years of service to the American people in a centennial celebration at its historic facility at 320 West Colfax Avenue today. It was February 1, 1906, when the United States Mint at Denver, under the direction of Superintendent Frank M. Downer, struck its first coins using three coining presses. The theme of today’s centennial commemoration party was “100 Years of Change.”

“Happy Birthday to the United States Mint at Denver!” exclaimed United States Mint Acting Director David A. Lebryk at the festivities in the ornate Grand Hallway of the edifice. “For 100 years, the United States Mint at Denver has manufactured some of the world’s finest coins and served proudly in the history of American coinage. From the Gold Rush to the Nation’s most popular coin program ever, the 50 State Quarters Program, Denver has produced 100 years of change.”

As more than 550 current and former United States Mint at Denver employees and former Superintendents looked on, Plant Manager Tim Riley read a City of Denver Mayoral Proclamation from the Honorable John W. Hickenlooper, declaring today “United States Mint at Denver Day.”

The Proclamation says, “The United States Mint at Denver has withstood the test of time and will continue to adapt and evolve into the future.”

“When we strike coins, we create a little bit of history every day,” observed Riley. “It is important to reflect on the progress we have made since we produced our first coin in 1906. Today, we pay tribute to our craft and to the artisans of the coins that jingle in the pockets and purses of nearly every American.”

Acting Director Lebryk and Plant Manager Riley presented a time capsule to be placed inside the doors of the Italian Renaissance style building modeled a century ago after a Florentine Palace. The time capsule contains a set of 2006 uncirculated coins minted in Denver and a scroll signed by every current employee.

The scroll reads, “Greetings from the past. On February 1, of the year 2006, the Employees of the United States Mint at Denver celebrated the first one hundred years of coin manufacturing at the facility. We hope that on this day, February 1, of the year 2106, the current Employees of this historic facility are still experiencing the joy and prosperity of working here as we did.”

The time capsule also contains a copy of the Mayoral Proclamation, recognizing the accomplishments of the United States Mint at Denver, which include a world record for manufacturing more than 15 billion circulating coins in one year, its importance as one of Denver’s most popular tourist attractions and its distinction of producing coins in the oldest functioning United States Mint facility. The proclamation also recognizes that the United States Mint at Denver has an outstanding safety record and that it received ISO 14001 certification in 2005. This certification means the facility is a conscientious and environmentally responsible neighbor.

Proof of the United States Mint at Denver’s progress in coin production is in the numbers. During the entire year of 1906, the facility produced about 167 million gold and silver coins valued at \$27 million. Today, the United States Mint at Denver strikes nearly that many coins in a week, or about 30 million coins a day. That adds up to nearly eight billion coins per year (cents, nickels, dimes, quarters, half — dollars and Golden Dollars). This year will be historic because it will include production of the Colorado commemorative quarter-dollar coin, part of the 50 State Quarters Program.

Although 100 years have passed since the United States Mint at Denver struck its first coin, the mission of the United States Mint at Denver has remained constant: to produce the Nation’s circulating coinage and to protect the Nation’s assets. There have been seven additions to the original building, including one in 1996 that provided the United States Mint at Denver with the capacity to manufacture dies.

“Our former co-workers must be proud to see how much we have grown and changed,” reflected Riley. “We are honored to have them join in our celebration because they contributed so much to our success.”

The United States Mint at Denver is rich in history. The story begins in 1858 when gold was discovered in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado. Miners, merchants and settlers moved to Colorado with dreams of riches. A year later, the city of Denver was founded; and in 1863, the United States Government established a United States Assay Office. Operations began in the facilities of Clark, Gruber and Company, formerly a private firm then located at 16th and Market Streets and acquired by the Government for \$25,000. Gold and nuggets brought there by miners from the surrounding area were accepted by the Assay Office for assaying and melting, and then stamped with their weight and quality. By 1895, the Assay Office was booming, bringing in more than \$5.6 million in gold and silver deposits annually.

In 1904, the Federal Government decided to convert the Assay Office into a working mint. A much grander facility was built, and coinage operations began in February 1906. The beautiful United States Mint at Denver remains one of Colorado's oldest institutions and most treasured historic sites.

The United States Mint at Denver also produced the first Congressional Medal, as well as the Colorado Statehood Centennial medal, struck on January 20, 1975.

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